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Project PARABEL

Technical Memorandum ORO-T-268

Received: 16 March 1954

Japanese Operations Against Guerrilla Forces

by

Gene Z. Hanrahan

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SUMMARY

PROBLEM

To prepare a brief historical analysis of the readily available data on Japanese Army operations against guerrilla forces from which conclusions may be derived for consideration in planning US Army counterguerrilla action.

FACTS

For a period of about ten years in the 1930's and 1940's, native tribesmen in the Burmese jungles, bandit irregulars in Manchuria, British-supplied guerrillas in Malaya, American-directed irregulars in the Philippines, and Communist-led Chinese conducted guerrilla warfare against Japanese occupation forces in many Asian lands. These anti-Japanese activities were the outcome of an occupation policy, brutal in its execution, that created serious local shortages and hardship.

The Japanese were quick to recognize and counter the threats of resistance activities. Occupation governments were patterned after that familiar to each area; "law and order" police systems were established, propaganda and education efforts were made, and "home rule" was encouraged to neutralize guerrilla force support and opposition.

Military force against guerrilla efforts took form in establishment of puppet forces to combat guerrilla armies, occupation of key lines and points by regular forces, and large-scale operations against guerrilla forces numbering as many as 50,000 men. Exemplary punitive action against guerrillas was a daily occurrence. In a few cases the Japanese attempted to counter guerrilla warfare with the combination of a military program followed by economic reforms.

DISCUSSION

From the experiences of Japanese attempts to control dissident elements in occupied areas much has been learned of potential value in planning US defense policy in zones of communication and in occupied territory. Although this is a survey of Japanese counterguerrilla methods used throughout all Asia, special emphasis has been given to those employed against the Chinese. This was

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because the Chinese Communists were the most dominant and best developed guerrilla foe the Japanese faced during the eight years of struggle. Although it is no longer a Japanese problem, the threat to established order from Chinese Communist-led guerrillas, whether it be in China, Korea, or Southeast Asia (where the Chinese Communist guerrilla doctrine predominates), remains real.

The major portion of the information used in this memorandum was obtained by reviewing captured Japanese military documents presently available in the National Archives and in the Office of The Chief of Military History. Whenever possible Japanese documents have been checked closely against official guerrilla reports. An attempt was made to cross-check data and to evaluate claims in the light of available evidence.

This work is not exhaustive, and the dearth of adequate source materials makes many of the derived conclusions admittedly tentative.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Oppressive economic exploitation and brutal occupation policies appeared to give strong impetus to armed resistance.

2. The most active guerrilla fighting was carried on in the twilight zones located between guerrilla bases and areas dominated by occupation forces.

3. It was of first importance for counter guerrilla forces to understand guerrilla warfare and to be competent in guerrilla tactics before attempting to engage in effective counter guerrilla action.

4. A key Japanese weakness in respect to cutting off the guerrillas from the local populace was the overemphasis placed on the purely mechanical techniques of isolation (i.e., blockades, patrols), and the general unawareness of the need to drive a political and psychological wedge between the guerrillas and the people.

5. Well-organized native forces were trained to take over a major portion of the occupation and were useful regardless of the degree of guerrilla activity.

6. Control of guerrilla regions by occupying only strategic lines and points required a minimum of manpower.

7. Blockades were often effective but costly means of counter guerrilla action.

8. Weapon attrition was more severely felt by a guerrilla force than was manpower attrition.

9. Guerrillas did not have to be annihilated to be controlled. Economic pressure, isolation, and blockade were successful in their control and defeat.

RECOMMENDATION

The US Army should consider formulation of an experimental counter guerrilla force for the potential missions of training rear-area and service troops in counter guerrilla tactics and for specific counter guerrilla action if required.

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**JAPANESE OPERATIONS
AGAINST GUERRILLA FORCES**

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CHARACTER OF THE OCCUPATION

ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

Japan, in the 1930's, was an industrial empire in need of vast quantities of raw materials. To get these she embarked upon a series of military adventures, first against Manchuria, then China, finally moving into Southeast Asia. Her primary concern was the economic exploitation of the areas under her control. To accomplish this she pursued a two-point plan: first, her forces were to live entirely off the country they occupied; and second, all raw materials were to be exported to the Japanese homeland.

Such a program, of course, was of little benefit to the peoples of the occupied lands. There followed a consequent reduction in the already precariously low standard of living and, in a majority of the areas, the national economic structure sagged appreciably under the heavy burden. It is not entirely improbable that Japan's ruthless economic policies contributed to the early growth of unrest, resentment, and resistance on the part of the occupied peoples. In the Philippines, for example, the Japanese commander there traced increased native resistance in large part to "... a shortage of goods, inflation, and above all, the stringency of food, clothing, and housing facilities."¹

All of these were, of course, the bitter fruits of Japanese economic exploitation. Throughout the course of her occupation Japan evidently paid too little heed to the axiom that satisfied people with full stomachs make poor guerrillas.

BRUTAL NATURE OF THE OCCUPATION

Added to the wholesale plundering of the raw materials and resources of the occupied areas was the savage nature of the Japanese conqueror. Murder, rape, plunder, and countless atrocities characterized the early days of occupation. Japanese combat commanders seldom attempted to suppress the brutal acts of their front-line troops in the belief that such a curtailment would "offend the rights of the soldier and stifle his spirit of violence," and newly occupied lands underwent a reign of terror no less terrifying than the German occupation of parts of Russia and Poland during World War II.

In some cases military government authorities attempted later to rectify these earlier acts of brutality by means of propaganda, more lenient treatment of the populace, and a system of rewards. But too often the Japanese officials wavered between extremes—now passive and now violent—and the people con-

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tinued to carry the remembrances of enemy brutality in their hearts regardless of protracted periods of relief.

Economic exploitation often necessitated forced labor and, in some cases, concentration camps. In addition intensive Japanese hatred and fear of Russian agents and spies made them doubly brutal when dealing with left-wing groups, especially with the independent, nationalistic Chinese. All real and suspected Communists were either shot without trial, placed in concentration camps, or forcibly relocated to specified areas where they could be closely watched.

Such features only served to increase the strain between the conqueror and the conquered. It is natural then that Allied liaison officers found a fertile field for the organization of resistance forces. On many occasions, however, guerrillas were indigenous in nature, needing little or no outside assistance. In China the Communists never faced a shortage of guerrilla recruits, no matter how heavy the campaign losses might have been. The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, the principal guerrilla force operating in Malaya during the Japanese occupation, also found that recruiting new personnel was much less a problem than arming, feeding, and caring for its men. At one time, for example, new recruits were "ploughed back" into the populace as reserves because the number of guerrilla volunteers far exceeded the ability of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army to assimilate them.

It is obviously no easy task to uncover the many obscure intangible reasons why a peasant might lay down his hoe, leave his family, and take up the precarious life of a guerrilla. Any categorical assumption that such factors as economic exploitation and brutality are the only, or even the most important, causative factors is admittedly oversimplifying the complex psychology of human motivation. Suffice it to say that these factors were of considerable importance in bringing about guerrilla unrest but were not necessarily the only ones at work.*

MILITARY GOVERNMENT

The Japanese were not slow to realize that varying degrees of resistance were inevitable under their form of occupation. Military government officials had orders, as far as possible, to rule a particular area as it had been governed in the past, for the Japanese reasoned that this would tend to keep any active opposition at a minimum. In Malaya, for example, a government similar to that organized under the British colonial administration was set up. In China every effort was made to retain the same traditional laws, regulations, and customs as those in existence before the occupation.

Always of first importance, of course, was the establishment of "law and order." According to a directive issued by the Inspector-General of the Japanese Army:

The first step in the establishment of law and order is the organization of a good police force with the necessary personnel, posts, etc. A sound training program and a vigorous system of rewards and punishment are

*It is beyond the scope of this study to go deeply into the difficult question of guerrilla motivation. It might be noted, however, that such factors as intense nationalism, aggressive revolutionary political beliefs, traditional anti-Japanese feelings, insecurity, unsettled conditions, and even adventurous spirit were among the many motivating factors here.

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necessary to clean up existing law enforcement agencies. A special higher secret police (TOKKOKA) should be activated immediately, formed according to the particular conditions of the occupied area. This organization is charged with nipping plots and Communist activities in the bud. The TOKKOKA will function in close liaison with the regular military establishment.²

In addition to an effective police system the Japanese pursued a number of propaganda and educational policies, all designed to win over or at least neutralize the occupied peoples. Schools were given radio sets and were required to tune in regular propaganda broadcasts. Newspapers, magazines, and leaflets were further propaganda tools aimed at keeping the populace in line.

As resistance grew, however, the principal medium of control reverted to fear and violent suppression. Suspects were interrogated closely, often under torture, and the death penalty was exacted even for petty crimes. An elaborate spy system was set up and informers were frequently brought in from outside to infiltrate the various resistance organizations. Even propaganda changed in tone and objective. In North China, for example, over 99 percent of a series of propaganda pamphlets analyzed stressed the strength and power of the Japanese Army, while only 40 percent contained a peaceful theme.² Clearly, the aim was control by fear and intimidation.

NATIVE RULE

It was the Japanese intention to give some semblance of home rule to the various areas under occupation as soon as was practicable. They hoped that the establishment of a native government would permit Japanese occupation forces to take up duties elsewhere and, at the same time, relieve Japan of the various routine problems connected with the occupation. They further reasoned that resistance to the native government would be less pronounced and troops recruited by the native regime could more easily be charged with dealing with the various subversive organizations.

Such policies, of course, were instituted solely to bring about the most effective form of occupation. Although outward semblances of freedom and autonomy were given, the Japanese were quick to maintain that "... it must be borne in mind that the military, diplomatic, and economic relations of these countries must be kept within the firm grip of the Japanese empire."² Similarly, although the heads and many of the lower functionaries of the new government were natives, all key personnel were to be Japanese.²

It is not within the province of this study to give full and comprehensive treatment to the subject of Japanese military government and its exploitation of native rule. Although admittedly brief, it is the intention here to demonstrate that it was largely through political means that the Japanese attempted to stabilize and neutralize the many regions under their control. On the one hand they continued their political policies aimed at ensuring a *status quo* in the more docile occupied regions; on the other they embarked upon a program of active military suppression of any and all resistance forces.

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THE MILITARY, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC PATTERN

MILITARY STRATEGY IN OCCUPIED AREAS

A shortage of manpower was the problem which dominated Japanese military strategy concerned with occupation. With a total population of some 73 million, she could put no more than 3- to 4-million men in the field and a majority of these were needed for her many far-flung battle fronts. To offset this evident disadvantage the Japanese adopted a two-point military program: first, they recruited sizable puppet armies to take over routine occupation duties; and second, they put into effect a flexible plan for the occupation and control of strategic lines and points in guerrilla-threatened regions.

Puppet Forces

Puppet forces were recruited, armed, and trained by the Japanese to assist their own troops in general occupation. As it was realized that both the fighting efficiency and the reliability of these troops would be rather low, they were utilized more to augment than completely replace Japanese occupation forces. In general the puppet troops would take over such routine assignments as garrison duty, guarding communications and transportation lines, and maintaining law and order among the local populace. Active punitive military operations taken against guerrillas, on the other hand, were undertaken either by regular Japanese units or by Japanese-led puppet forces.

The puppet forces generally were considered the arm of the local native government and were to be kept as flexible in organization and purpose as possible. In all cases, however, the senior command was to remain in Japanese hands. A general staff directive for the China area emphasized these points:

Chinese armed groups will concern themselves primarily with co-operation in the restoration of law and order in Japanese occupied regions, at the same time endeavoring to furnish support for the execution of the policies of the Peoples' government. They will be organized and directed to meet local requirements for self-defense and order; due cognizance will be taken of local circumstances... In actual practice, general policy concerning the organization, supervision, and employment of armed groups will be determined by the Japanese military authorities.⁴

In organization the puppet troops were designed to function primarily as infantry units. Their chief weapons were rifles and pistols, supplemented by light and heavy machine guns and mortars. They were given no artillery, tank, or air support.⁴

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The Japanese probably gained the best results in the employment of puppet forces in the China area. Many native troops there were recruited from the thousands of captured or surrendered Chinese Nationalist soldiers. In certain cases whole units were known to have gone over to the side of the Japanese.* Although Japanese Army plans called for the mobilization of some 300,000 puppet troops in China,⁴ total estimates at the close of the war placed this number in excess of 450,000.⁵

The employment of this large puppet force was no doubt a costly undertaking, but it appears to have realized satisfactory results. In North China, for example, Japanese/guerrilla actions in the month of November 1941 totaled

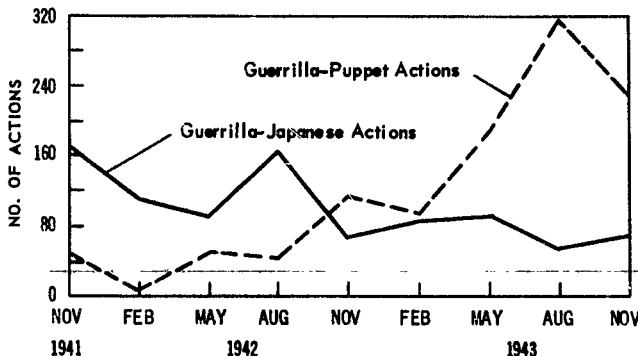


Fig. 1—Incidence of Guerrilla Actions in North China during the Two-year Period, November 1941 - November 1943

Adopted From: KO 1800 Force, HQ North China Area Army.

*Report of Jan 10, 1944" Classified. Appendix III.

some 220. Of these, 170 involved Japanese troops while only 50 involved puppet units. With the implementation of a large-scale puppet military organization, however, this situation was reversed. In August 1943, although actual guerrilla engagements had risen to a monthly total of 366, only 70 involved the Japanese, while 296 involved puppet forces.⁶ (The graph in Fig. 1 indicates this trend for the two-year period November 1941 - November 1943.) It appears that the increased reliance on puppet forces during this period was due more to better puppet organization and effectiveness than to a reduction in guerrilla capabilities. In fact, during the same period guerrilla operations actually increased in number and scope.

In occupied regions where the guerrillas were less of a problem, as in the Dutch East Indies, Indo-China, and Malaya, the Japanese found that expenses incurred in the formation of regular puppet troops exceeded the over-all value of such forces. In these regions emphasis was given instead to the build-up

*During the war, a large number of mercenary troops and warlord armies were integrated into the Nationalist armies under the command of Chiang Kai-shek. The quality, effectiveness, and loyalty of these units were considerably inferior to that of Chiang's regular units and it was from these that the Japanese drew most of their recruits for the puppet armies.

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of local police agencies and secret service units. Where needed the local authorities could draw upon Japanese secret service or MP units garrisoned in the area. Punitive operations against individual guerrilla forces were then taken either by the regular Japanese army units stationed there or by fresh units which made use of such operations as realistic training exercises.

Occupation of Strategic Lines and Points

In areas such as North China, where the guerrilla forces were both sizable and aggressive, the Japanese were quick to realize that total annihilation of these dissidents would be both costly and extremely difficult. At the outbreak of the Pacific war a number of experienced troops were transferred out of China and such a project became next to impossible. As a result the Japanese commanders learned to adapt themselves to this condition. In effect, militarily, they learned to "live with their problem." They realized that to control a country effectively—to guarantee its neutralization and, at the same time, to exploit its natural resources—it was not necessary to occupy the entire country. On the contrary, it required merely the control of certain strategic points and the lines between those points.

Strategic points were economic and political as well as military in nature. Areas producing essential raw materials, industrial and commercial centers, provincial capitals, sea and river ports, transportation hubs, and militarily advantageous strong points were among the many so-called strategic points. Railroad lines, motor roads, and rivers made up the essential lines between these points. The Japanese reckoned that control of such lines and points would require from one-half to one-third fewer troops than would the occupation of the entire country. On the other hand such a reduction in strength would not lessen the over-all control of the country under occupation. The occupation of strategic lines and points in guerrilla areas, of course, did not solve the problem for the Japanese, but rather permitted them to retain a maximum hold on important areas with a minimum cost in all-important troop strength.

The one obvious weakness in the occupation of lines and points is its all-around defensive nature. Positions would necessarily be static and there was a marked tendency for the defense to be passive. This was at variance with Japanese military doctrine which insisted vigorously on the inherent superiority of the offensive. In addition total reliance on a passive static defense is seldom profitable and the Japanese were not slow to realize that such defense had to be augmented by active, aggressive, mobile operations.

The areas under complete dominance of the guerrillas were of lesser importance to the occupation forces than those twilight zones in-between which were actually controlled by neither. Guerrilla areas were by nature usually more remote, were located in dense forests, swamps, or mountains, and were of little over-all strategic importance. The twilight zones, on the other hand, were usually more densely populated, were often agriculturally productive regions, and most important, were adjacent to Japanese lines and points. In many regions these twilight zones would be controlled by the Japanese during the day and by the guerrillas after dark; or by the Japanese only as long as they were willing and able to maintain a superior armed force there.

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It was usually in these twilight zones that the every day struggle between guerrilla and occupier took place as the occupation continued. Experienced guerrillas were continuously attempting to expand their areas of complete

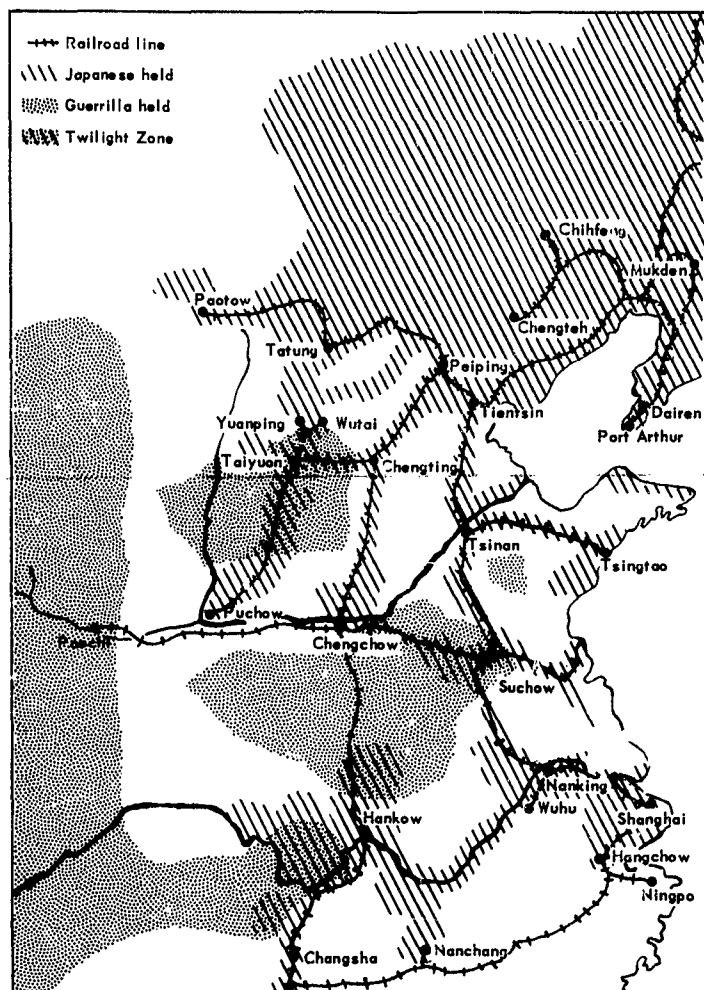


Fig. 2—Japanese Occupation of Strategic Lines and Points, Guerrilla-controlled Areas, and Twilight Zones in Central and North China during 1940-1942

domination (often called guerrilla bases), while the Japanese were interested in neutralizing these buffer zones, thereby affording a maximum of security for their lines and points. Thus, though the defense of lines and points was passive and static in nature, such a defense was balanced by active, aggressive, mobile operations waged in the twilight zones. (Figure 2 shows the Japanese

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strategy of line/point occupation, and the relation between guerrilla-controlled areas, twilight zones, and Japanese-held regions in North and Central China.)

The Japanese term for the neutralization of these twilight zones and military expansion of their sphere of influence was "pacification," and it meant just that. The disputed regions were pacified, not so much by the total annihilation of the enemy as by forcing him from the area by military action and purging his influence there. The Japanese realized that military operations designed to annihilate the enemy would require a much greater expenditure of men and material than would similar operations aimed at maintaining law and order and continuing the status quo.

The usual method of pacification involved continual patrol action throughout the length and breadth of the twilight zones, a constant check of political, military, and economic trends in these areas, and daily punitive operations conducted against guerrilla cadre (i.e., highly trained guerrillas who specialized in organizing and training the local populace into paramilitary units).

At times, however, even such action as this was not enough. Intensive guerrilla efforts then had to be countered through large-scale "mopping-up" operations. These were taken principally with the purpose of wiping out a troublesome guerrilla base, ensuring greater protection for a sensitive railroad line, and so forth.

Japanese troop strength involved in mopping-up campaigns varied, depending upon the size of the enemy force and the area of operations. This ranged all the way from battalion operations to operations conducted by whole armies. Typical of the latter was that carried out by the Chinese Expeditionary Army in 1941. A Communist guerrilla force estimated at 50,000 men had been unusually active, threatening Japanese communication lines. It was decided that large-scale punitive action would have to be taken against this force and its base destroyed. The campaign was planned in two phases: first, the encirclement and annihilation of the main enemy force; and second, the roundup and extermination of all dispersed enemy elements and remnant groups.⁷

In August of that year, the 1st Army and the Mongolian Garrison Army moved in along the border of Hopei province, cutting off the rear avenue of escape of this guerrilla force. At the same time three Japanese divisions began a gradual encirclement of the base, pushing the guerrillas up against the stop-line established along the Hopei border. Phase one lasted for two months and was marked by a series of violent sporadic clashes with the guerrilla force. By October phase two was put into operation. Roads were constructed to facilitate mobility through the guerrilla regions, strong points were erected in commanding positions and a series of lines of interception was set up to check any enemy attempts at escape.

By December remnant guerrilla pockets were cleaned out and the operation was considered completed. Although the Japanese had captured the guerrilla bases and killed or captured many thousands of guerrillas, the guerrilla command and most of the cadre actually managed to escape either by infiltration through the lines or by going underground in the rural villages. Though the operation gained some semblance of success, it was only temporary. Months later the same guerrillas slowly but purposely began again to carve out a guerrilla base in the same region.⁷

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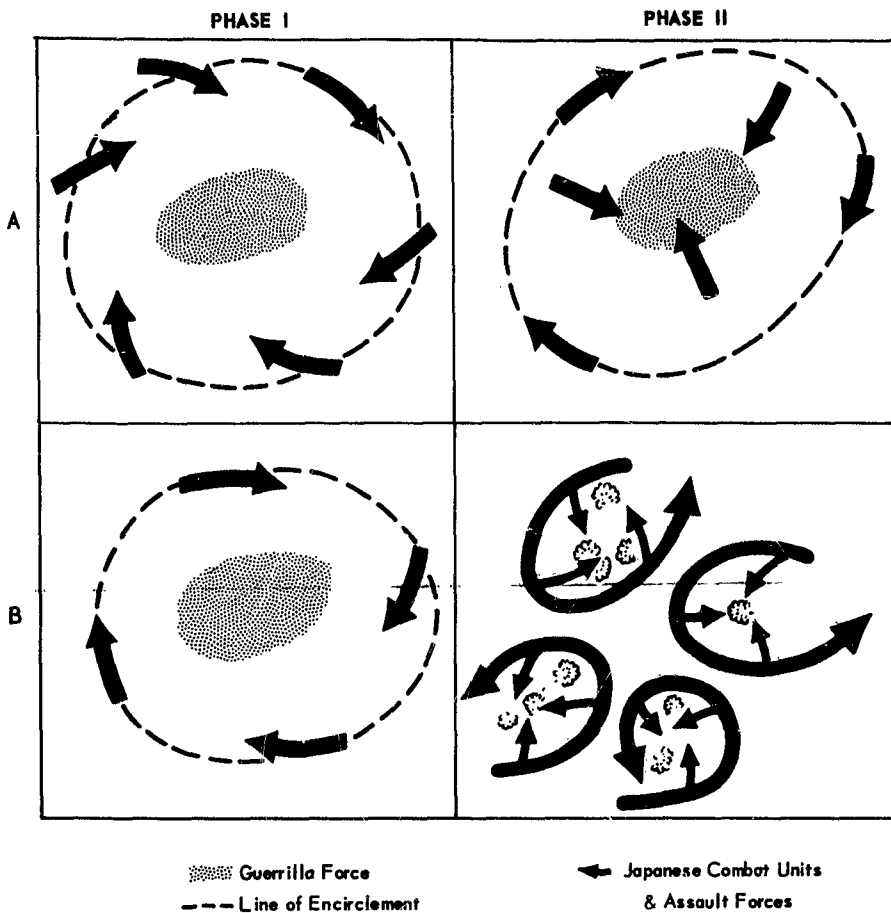


Fig. 3—Japanese Tactics against Stubborn Guerrilla Unit Resistance (A) and against Crumbling Guerrilla Resistance (B)

Militarily, these mopping-up operations usually involved the standard methods of encirclement, gradually closing the ring around the enemy force. On occasions infantry divisions would be reorganized into several semi-independent mobile units for the encirclement operations.⁸ After the enemy had been encircled Japanese tactics called for one of two procedures. If the enemy resisted stubbornly and fought as a unit, the drive against him would be made by a series of pincer-like thrusts effected by part of the force. The remainder, acting as a supporting reserve element, took up positions along the line of encirclement.

If, on the other hand, guerrilla resistance seemingly crumbled, and the guerrillas appeared to be breaking up into small groups and attempting to infiltrate through the Japanese lines, the whole area would be split up. Each Japa-

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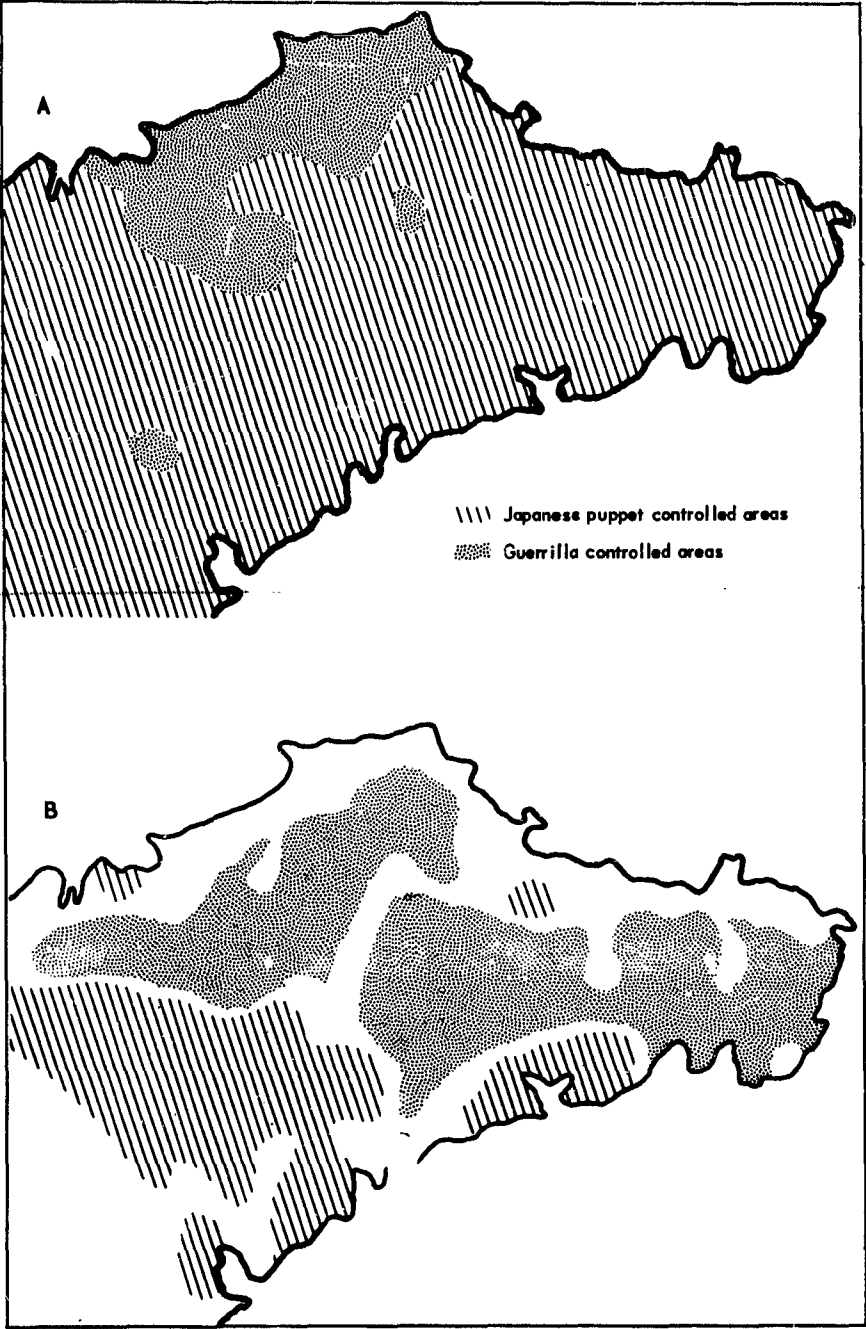


Fig. 4—Control of Occupied Areas in Shantung Province in 1939 (A) and 1941 (B)

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nese unit would then concentrate on an individual inner encirclement, mopping-up the remnants within its own particular area (see Fig. 3). Although this technique showed much promise, the Japanese do not appear to have made it standing operating procedure in their counter guerrilla operations. Tactical methods were the choice of local commanders who were often ignorant of guerrilla methods; needless to say, this often proved disastrous.

According to official reports very few mopping-up operations conducted in North China from 1937 to 1945 were successful in annihilating the enemy.⁹ As far as the Japanese high command was concerned, however, such mopping-up operations were most probably considered effective even though they failed to destroy the foe; they seriously reduced his potential threat and, in effect, guaranteed the continuance of the status quo. This was but a continuation of their over-all "pacification" policy.

It would be false, however, to assume that the Japanese neutralized the guerrilla bases, or even controlled many of the twilight zones at their own pleasure. Often the struggle was a seesaw one, the disputed regions changing hands many times over. At times the guerrillas even managed to wrest some of the lines and points away from the occupier, to be forced themselves from these critical regions only after a difficult protracted struggle had been waged. Shantung province in 1939 and again in 1941 was characteristic of this unending struggle. In 1939 the guerrillas held a smaller area but controlled a vital seacoast communications sector. By 1941 the guerrillas had been driven from this area but held larger, more mountainous regions (see Fig. 4). Maps for 1943 and 1944 indicate but another shift in Japanese/guerrilla-dominated areas in Shantung.

JAPANESE COUNTERGUERRILLA POLICY

The most striking feature of Japanese counter guerrilla efforts, regardless of the merits of individual military techniques or policies instituted in a few selective areas, was that the Japanese had neither an over-all plan nor a system of operations. No well thought-out standardized policies were handed down from the Imperial General Staff simply because none were drawn up. As a result local Japanese commanders were given free rein to deal with the guerrilla problem as they saw fit.

Insofar as this permitted the commander to adapt his operations to the particular conditions existent in his own locale it was sound, but in all other respects it had marked shortcomings. Too frequently the local commander was either ignorant of or misinformed about the complex activities of guerrillas. In most cases effective counter guerrilla operations were not the product of instruction and practice but rather the result of long hard months of costly action. In some areas local commanders never did master the principles of counter guerrilla warfare, principally because they never understood the true nature of the enemy they were fighting.

Of first importance was the recognition of the fact that guerrilla warfare is politico-military in nature and hence must necessarily be countered by a combination of political as well as military means. In many cases the first impulse of the Japanese soldier was to solve the guerrilla problem by military

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means alone, and more often than not this policy served only to stiffen guerrilla resistance. Many of the Japanese commanders in China eventually realized this, but it was only through long difficult years of experience; the right education at certain command levels would have gone a long way toward resolving this difficulty at a much earlier date.

The treatment of captured guerrillas provides an excellent example of this. When there were no orders to the contrary, the disposition of captured guerrillas was left up to the discretion of the area commander. In a majority of the cases this meant that a captured guerrilla could expect to be treated as a spy—first facing brutal interrogation and then certain execution. This, of course, had only adverse results. The struggle became more ruthless, with quarter neither asked nor given and surrender on either side out of the question. As a result individual operations often resolved into a battle of annihilation. Unit commanders could not expect to win a battle simply by outflanking or encircling the enemy; they could do so only through a difficult protracted struggle, eliminating enemy resistance to the last man.

Similar action was also taken against Allied liaison personnel. The question of whether a liaison officer with a guerrilla force was in uniform or out, or whether when captured he could be legally treated according to the Geneva Convention, became purely academic. In most cases he could expect to be shot as a spy. Experienced liaison personnel, of course, learned to fight accordingly.

The treatment of the local populace by the occupation forces is also of interest. The Japanese often resorted to taking hostages from a village suspected of assisting the guerrillas, making a certain number of people responsible for the railroad lines in their own area, and so forth. These people would then be executed in the event guerrillas became active. In a majority of cases, however, such a policy produced little in the way of positive results. Not only was life so cheap that its loss meant little to the resistance movement, but the guerrillas themselves often followed by initiating the same policy, thereby putting the local people in the middle and guaranteeing their cooperation with the dominant force. In some cases the execution of hostages is even known to have actually stimulated rather than repressed the resistance effort.

It may also be worthy of note that in many ways the man in the guerrilla movement was much less important than the weapon he carried. Consequently the loss of the individual was less important, for there were ten ready and willing to take his place. The loss of a weapon, on the other hand, was much more seriously felt. In all too many cases the Japanese policy concentrated on killing the man and often neglected to consider fully the singular importance of his weapon. Cases are regularly cited in guerrilla accounts of continued Japanese preoccupation with the "kill" and their seeming disregard for weapons captures. Guerrillas retreating before an all-out enemy assault would frequently hide their heavier weapons and equipment along the way and seldom found them disturbed upon their subsequent return to the region. Japanese troops in hot pursuit of guerrilla elements only infrequently paused long enough to search out and capture or destroy discarded and half-hidden weapons.

On rarer occasions the Japanese commanders in certain areas reversed their brutal counter guerrilla policies in an attempt to encourage guerrilla surrenders. But all too often the past years of brutality combined with the

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commanders' own inexperience and naiveté in the new policy led to equally poor results. Such was the case in the Philippines. In August 1943 "independence" was given to the Philippines and jurisdiction over guerrillas tentatively reverted to the puppet government. Since the struggle against the Japanese was then theoretically concluded, guerrillas were to be looked upon as traitors to the new Philippine regime. On the other hand the puppet government offered total amnesty to any dissidents who surrendered, including employment for those without a means of livelihood and relief to the impoverished. But the loyal Filipinos were not so easily fooled and few guerrillas surrendered. On the contrary the guerrilla forces sensed that Japanese overtures were made from a position of weakness rather than from strength and took advantage in the lull of Japanese counter guerrilla operations to strengthen their own position. Realizing too late that their plan was a failure, the Japanese again reverted to their traditional all-out war against the resistance.¹⁰

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

In a few exceptional cases the Japanese appear to have made some serious moves to institute effective programs to counter guerrilla activities. One of the more noteworthy of these was the SEIKYO, or Rural Purification Movement, instituted in July 1941 in Central China. The over-all results were largely inconclusive, but the program itself represented a highly intelligent and promising approach to the guerrilla program there.

The Rural Purification Movement had three principal phases: military action, politico-military consolidation, and ideological-economic betterment. In the first phase a region (usually a county) in which the guerrillas were particularly active was selected. Japanese military units would then be sent in to conduct a series of mopping-up campaigns. Every attempt would be made to wipe out all guerrilla units and cadre in this particular region.

In the second phase the puppet government took a major portion of the work from the Japanese. The operations in that region would then become, as far as possible, autonomous and independent. A "model" region would be set up and a series of "self-defense" militia units would be organized. The People's Courts would deal with suspected dissidents and law and order would be maintained by the local authorities. Every attempt would be made to institute a strong government and a native security force. At the same time efforts would be made to organize the peasantry in the absence of effective guerrilla counter-action. Throughout this period Japanese troops would remain out of the region but close enough to deal with any serious guerrilla countermoves. In addition the entire operation would be supervised from behind the scenes by Japanese officials.

The final phase was characterized by intensive propaganda and reeducation on the one hand and a betterment of the living conditions of the local populace on the other. Schools would be rebuilt, educational and cultural programs instituted, foodstuffs and essentials taken off the ration list, amnesty granted to all guerrillas who would surrender, and so forth.

The primary purpose of the Rural Purification Movement, of course, was to gain fuller control over the twilight zones between the guerrilla-dominated

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bases and the occupied regions. Every attempt was made to put the guerrillas on a long-term defensive by severing all relations between them and the local populace and by strengthening the authority of the local puppet government in these regions. At the same time "model areas" (those in which the Rural Purification Movement was generally successful) would gradually be expanded, one after another, and extended deliberately into those regions under guerrilla control.

Although the Rural Purification Movement showed considerable promise, it did not produce the results expected. Personnel (puppet officials) charged with carrying out the movement were often poorly trained, unreliable, and working solely for personal gain. In some cases the people actually suffered more under their domination than when the region was occupied directly by Japanese troops. Continued economic exploitation of these areas by the Japanese further served to handicap this program.

In some cases phase one (military action against the guerrilla troops and cadre) would not be completely successful or would be concluded too early in order to meet a certain time schedule. On these occasions the remnant guerrilla forces would often remain strong enough to ensure the failure of all efforts undertaken by the puppet authorities to carry through phases two and three. Finally, although a basic precept was the betterment of the livelihood of the local peoples (the Japanese reasoning correctly here that contented men with full stomachs seldom become guerrillas), the Japanese themselves were often hard pressed to deliver the necessary goods originally outlined in the plan; those goods not exported to Japan often found their way into the greedy hands of unscrupulous puppet officials. Had these and other shortcomings been remedied, however, the extensive application of this movement in the occupied regions might have produced even more favorable results.

A final note should be made on the subject of blockades, an essential feature of the SEIKYO as well as other serious counter guerrilla efforts. The blockade was instituted to check individuals and goods passing from one area to another. Of key importance was the so-called "economic" blockade of the guerrilla-controlled regions. Foodstuffs, clothing, and all materials essential to the resistance struggle were cut off and every attempt was made to strangle the guerrilla economy. Salt, for example, was an item given special attention. A lack of salt in the diet of the peoples in the guerrilla regions was dearly felt, and often did more to neutralize a dangerous area than all military and political efforts combined.

The mechanics of the blockade were relatively simple but often proved costly to set up and maintain. The usual procedure was to encircle a suspected area and establish a series of check points through which all traffic in and out of the area would have to flow. In many cases three rings formed the encirclement. The first ring was set up some 3 to 5 miles outside the designated area, the second 7 to 10 miles, and the third 10 to 12 miles. In most cases the blockade ring between check points was made up of bamboo fences, deep ditches, mine fields, or electrically charged wire. These encirclement rings would, of course, be patrolled regularly. According to Communist sources the Japanese had over 60,000 miles of 'lockade ditches and 3600 miles of blockade fences in North China. The Japanese themselves admit that in the Suchow area alone they had set up over 4200 miles of electrically charged wire fences in connec-

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tion with the SEIKYO. In some cases the areas between the blockade lines and guerrilla regions would be made into so-called "ghost areas" with all buildings leveled, trees cut down, and residents relocated elsewhere. These areas proved effective but often did much to aggravate relations between the local populace and the Japanese.

On the whole the blockade usually proved to be an effective instrument in counter guerrilla action. But its cost was heavy and its employment had to be weighed closely in terms of over-all value. In certain cases, for example, the guerrilla regions would be too extensive or the terrain too diverse to make such an operation feasible. Finally, the blockade was but an adjunct of the entire counter guerrilla effort and by nature could never be employed without corollary military and political action.

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REAR-AREA SECURITY

TROOP DEPLOYMENT

Japanese troop deployment in rear areas was dependent largely upon local conditions. Aside from special security forces, a major portion of the occupation units was used to guard the more important points and communication/transportation lines. Based on their experiences gained in China and Manchuria the Japanese usually used a standard deployment of one to two infantry companies in important towns, two squads to a platoon in villages, and the remainder of the troops garrisoned in protection of strong points, railroads, bridges, mines, factories, roads, etc.

The over-all number of troops required, of course, varied greatly. Strength was left up to the discretion of area commanders who would station their forces according to existing conditions, the number of troops available, and other requirements such as extension in territory and the area to be secured. As expected, front-line military commitments often drew off the best troops, leaving to rear-area detachments, troops in rest centers, etc., the task of routine counter guerrilla security.

Japanese troop deployment for the Philippines immediately prior to the American invasion is of interest here. The Japanese commander there called for a minimum of 24 battalions to secure his rear areas against guerrilla action and seven divisions to break up the regular invasion effort.¹¹ This would mean a ratio of approximately three front-line troops for every one soldier tied down in rear-area security. In China, where guerrilla action was more fully developed, the requirements for rear-area security were greater and the number of troops so engaged at times actually exceeded those forces engaged in front-line action.⁵

STRONG POINTS

The Japanese made extensive use of strong points to ensure greater security in the occupied areas. Most of these were located in commanding positions, along railroad lines, near bridges, and adjacent to key industrial installations. In China alone an estimated 30,000 were constructed. Of this number approximately 10,000, or one-third, were destroyed in the course of the struggle against the guerrillas.⁵

Since the guerrilla forces seldom had any heavy weapons, the strong points were constructed principally as a defense against small-arms fire and grenades.

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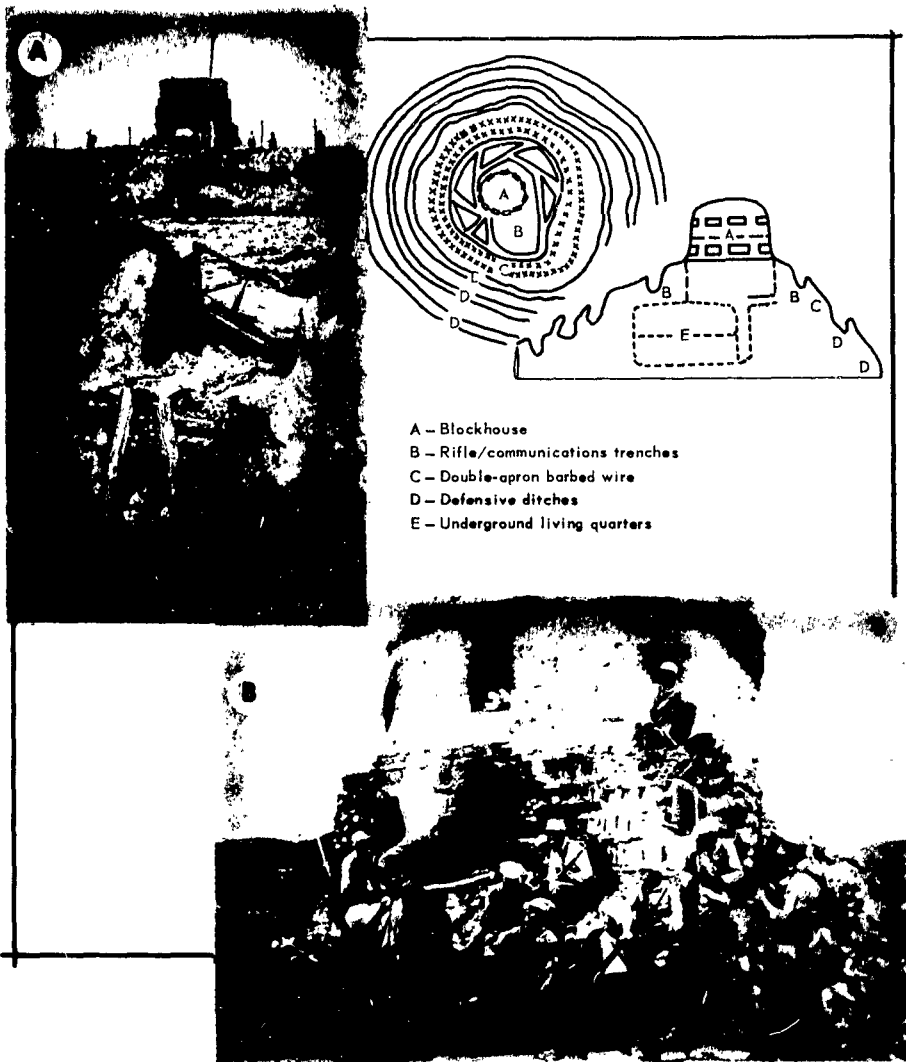


Fig. 5—The Japanese Strong Point at Ma Fang in North China. Diagram (upper right) Showing Cross Section and Profile of Defense System. Photograph A Is View of the Blockhouse Facing up from Second Defensive Ditch (note remains of wooden drawbridge) and Photograph B Shows the Blockhouse Shortly after the Capture of Chinese Guerrillas.

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Most of these were blockhouses, either square or circular, and were made of brick, stone, or mortar. In tropical regions a majority were constructed of wood, and many were built along the lines of a bunker. The points were so constructed that the gun ports would provide a clear field of fire on all sides and some had permanent machine-gun emplacements. The immediate area was usually cleared of trees and other features which could offer cover or concealment to an attacker. When possible these strong points would be situated on a commanding position such as a small hill. A series of barbed-wire fences, mine fields, blockade ditches (some 15 ft deep and 15 ft wide), and outer emplacements were set up so as to afford the blockhouse maximum security in the event of an all-out assault.

Such points were usually manned by a squad or a platoon, the number depending largely on the size of the blockhouse and importance of the objective being protected. Because of the large number of such installations and the dearth of communications equipment, radios were rarely available and the principal methods of communication were by flares and code flags. Whenever possible each strong point was constructed so as to be well within the view of another such point or of a garrison unit. To facilitate over-all defense strong points were often mutually defensive in nature; if one were undergoing an attack, elements from nearby units would be dispatched immediately to assist in its defense. The guerrillas, of course, often turned this to advantage, either by ambushing the supporting forces or by feinting an attack on one point, then quickly effecting a major assault elsewhere.

In their assault on a Japanese strong point the guerrillas recognized the inadequacy of their small arms and usually resorted to varying types of trickery. On certain occasions they would tunnel under the blockhouse and blow it up; at other times they would dress a "suicide squad" in Japanese uniforms, gain access to the strong point, and pin down the guards in a fire fight until the main guerrilla force arrived. In North China the local guerrilla commanders could call on guerrilla headquarters for small artillery weapons for use in "softening up" the defense first. Immediately after the action these artillery pieces would be returned to headquarters.

A typical Japanese strong point was that located at Ma Fang in North China. It was occupied for several years by a regular Japanese unit and withstood several determined guerrilla assaults, including one in which mortars were employed. Demands elsewhere subsequently led the Japanese to garrison the point with a puppet force of questionable worth, and a well-planned guerrilla assault finally resulted in the defeat of these less resolute defenders. Following its capture the guerrillas blew up the principal defense emplacements, but were later forced to withdraw under pressure from Japanese reinforcements (see Fig. 5).

PATROLS

Patrols were employed to stabilize, as far as possible, the areas between the strong points, to check railroad and other communication/transportation lines for attempted sabotage, and to make periodic checks of the surrounding area for evidence of guerrilla activity.

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To ensure greater coverage most patrols were made by foot and nothing heavier than light automatic weapons were carried. The patrols varied in strength anywhere from a squad to a company, depending largely on the intensity and degree of guerrilla activity in that particular region. Whenever practicable patrols were made by regular garrison forces and often served the additional purpose of keeping the troops in good physical and mental shape. Such patrols were not usually offensive in nature but rather were charged with the primary task of security in the region between the strong points. Although they seldom refused an engagement, they were often under orders not to pursue a guerrilla force actively or to go out of their own area to engage such a force. Their task was primarily one of security. Bitter experience taught the Japanese that such patrols, unless otherwise instructed, could easily be decoyed into an ambush or led astray while a guerrilla unit made a successful attack elsewhere in their regular patrol area.

A glaring weakness in Japanese patrol techniques is evidenced in their stubborn insistence upon regularity and punctuality; they followed a definite unchanging time schedule and invariably went by the same route day-in and day-out. The more observant guerrillas subsequently learned to "set their watches" by the patrols and timed their ambushes and raids accordingly. Yet, regardless of their costly experiences in this procedure, the regular Japanese officers seldom made changes to meet guerrilla resourcefulness and flexibility, insisting instead on "maintaining a regular military schedule."

This problem, of course, was more than just a question of alternative scheduling. It was apparently another manifestation of Japanese reluctance to engage guerrillas in any way other than by using regular military forces and the standard tactics employed in regular combat operations.

VILLAGE SECURITY

Security in villages was both internal and external in nature. External security was concerned principally with defense from guerrilla attack. If the villages were walled, gun emplacements would be situated at strategic points and the immediate area around the villages would be cleared so as to afford the defenders a clear range of fire. All curved or irregular walls were usually torn down and rebuilt along straight lines. Two double walls would sometimes be constructed in front of the village entrances so as to impede the attackers further. Those villages without walls were often ringed with barbed wire, electrically charged wire fences, or mine fields, while the Japanese defenders constructed one or two bunker-type fortifications at key defense points.

Internal security was more difficult to maintain and often of greater overall importance. It was necessary not only to guard against guerrilla infiltration into the villages, but also to see to it that the villagers gave no material or other assistance to the resistance movement. A close check would be made at the village entrance of all individuals passing through those villages permanently occupied by a Japanese or puppet force. Persons would be required to have identification, state the purpose of their trip, their destination and length of time away, and stand a close search for weapons, goods, and so forth.

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Periodic spot checks and searches would be made of homes and shops in the villages and an exact census kept of all individuals residing there. Sometimes a list of the individuals living in each house would be posted on the front doors and was always subject to close examination by passing officials. Whenever possible extensive use would be made of informers, agents, and puppet officials to obtain information as to suspected dissidents and any unusual activity in the locale. In some cases monetary rewards would be given to the bearers of information, the authorities taking special pains to see to it that the name of the informer be kept a close secret.

Not all troops could be permanently garrisoned because of limitations in troop strength and the vast number of small villages. Such villages were fertile fields for resistance organization, and special attempts were made to keep the degree of guerrilla support there at an absolute minimum. Patrols would make spot checks of these villages, often holding a complete census count at dawn or at some other unexpected hour. On occasions the village would be surrounded and an intensive house-by-house search conducted. Whenever possible Japanese intelligence authorities would attempt to introduce an agent into the villages as a merchant or farmer, relying on him to make periodic reports as to guerrilla activities there.

The Japanese always considered it of first importance to extend the occupation control down to as low a governing level as possible. In most cases the lowest regular level of occupying or puppet authority was at the county level. In the larger out-of-the-way rural areas this often left sizable regions devoid of tight occupation control. To offset this an effective time-tested system of mutual security, called the "Pao Chia" system, was instituted broadly in China and, to a lesser degree, in parts of Southeast Asia.

Ten families residing close together were usually organized into a Pao, with five Pao, or fifty families, grouped into a Ta or Great Pao. The most respected and influential man in the Great Pao would then be appointed Pao head. He, in turn, would be expected to select heads for each of the five Pao under his immediate jurisdiction.

The Great Pao head was held completely responsible for the acts of any of the people under his jurisdiction. The Japanese or puppet authorities expected him to keep a complete and accurate census of all his charges, collect taxes, disseminate timely occupation information, and so forth. In some cases he would also be expected to organize and train a "self-defense corps," or militia, made up of men 18 to 45 years of age. These could be used for routine guard duty and for keeping local law and order.

In the event any member of the Great Pao joined up with or assisted the resistance effort, the head was expected to turn him over to the occupation authorities. If he did not, or himself assisted the guerrillas, he would be executed immediately as an example, and another Great Pao head appointed from the families.

Such a policy often worked more effectively than the taking of large numbers of hostages at random. For, in effect, the most important member of this group was always a hostage and both from love and respect the people under him seldom undertook any activity which would endanger him. On the other hand the Pao head himself, both from personal fear and an interest in his people's welfare, usually made every attempt to cooperate with the occupation

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Fig. 6—Ai-lu-hsiao-nien-tui (Railroad Protection Youth Corps) Members Patrolling a Railroad in North China



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authorities. For the guerrillas to kill the Great Pao head, of course, was out of the question. It would most certainly turn the people against them. The Pao Chia system often did much to curtail active mass support for the guerrillas in the rural regions.

RAILROAD SECURITY

Security of railroad lines was of great importance to the Japanese but they well realized that such security could often tie down vast numbers of needed combat units. In this respect area commanders were instructed to leave railroad security, in the more peaceful areas at least, to civil authorities. In other areas units stationed within a particular zone were charged with the responsibility of the communication/transportation lines within that particular zone. This would free other forces for operations at the front.¹²

The security of railroads usually required the cooperation of the local populace. In some cases hostages would be taken and in others whole villages would be made responsible for stretches of track adjacent to them. In regions where the puppet government was relatively stable, Ai-lu hsiao-nien-tui, or Railroad Protection Youth Corps, were organized. The Corps were made up of children under the age of fourteen who walked the tracks, paying close attention to attempted sabotage and so forth. Their youth usually protected them from retaliation by the guerrillas and they were paid regularly and given special uniforms. According to Japanese sources, some 8000 or more of these children were organized in 1942 in North China and parts of Manchuria (see Fig. 6).¹³

All especially vulnerable places such as bridges were usually well guarded with blockhouses. In some cases these would be constructed of steel or concrete. As most of the sabotage was carried on under cover of darkness, light armored trains would be run over the lines at dawn to check for danger spots. In most cases regular trains would run with the locomotives in the center and one or two empty boxcars forming a buffer at the head of the train. In North China, where sabotage and raids were both frequent and well organized, trains would seldom run alone but rather in groups as in a sea convoy. An armored train would usually precede the main body and each individual train would have an armed unit in it, ready to deal with any guerrilla attacks. The trains often mounted machine guns both in the front and rear cars which would be fired at any suspicious-looking objects or individuals. Train convoys usually worked well in areas remote from enemy air bases, but proved a dangerous medium in areas subject to Allied air action.

In regions such as North China the guerrillas were both resourceful and resourceful in attacking railroads, and the Japanese were forced to adopt fresh measures to deal with each new guerrilla technique. Railroad sabotage ran anywhere from the removal of sections of track (which were either buried or taken away to be melted down for weapons and ammunition) to the demolition of bridges as trains were in the process of crossing. Needless to say, Japanese railroad security detachments were given little respite. According to guerrilla reports, Japanese working under optimum conditions removed a derailed locomotive in six hours and an over-turned train in two days. Such con-

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ditions, however, were seldom obtainable, as the guerrillas made special attempts to ambush or raid railroad repair parties (see Fig. 7).



Fig. 7—An Example of Guerrilla Railroad Sabotage in North China
(note extensive damage to both bridge and cars)

CONVOY SECURITY

Japanese motor convoys traveling through guerrilla-infested areas usually had armed guards and were often accompanied either by an armored car or light tank. Every attempt was made to show superior strength in order to discourage possible guerrilla attack. In some cases dummy soldiers were put on empty trucks to deceive the enemy as to the number of armed guards. Whenever possible individual vehicles were kept off the road and convoys, except in areas subject to enemy air attack, were made as large as possible. Most of the traveling was done during the day and movement at night was kept to an absolute minimum.

Convoy speed usually depended upon the type of road being traveled and the terrain through which the vehicles were passing. In dangerous, potential

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ambush areas the convoy was speeded up and if attacked attempted to break through the ambush or raid rather than stop to fight it out. The Japanese usually relied on superior fire power to break through, and convoy guards were known to open fire even if subject only to sporadic rifle fire. In the event of a road block or destruction of the leading vehicle, the men would detruck and take up firing positions from surrounding cover. On occasions the armored car or tank would furnish covering fire while the main convoy attempted to escape.

The usual distance between trucks in the convoy was 100 yd, while the point vehicle and rear-security elements would travel some 200 yd ahead or behind the main body. This was done so as to keep the more vulnerable trucks close together in a unit, out of immediate range of enemy ambush fire, and to permit the security elements more freedom of action in the event of surprise attack.

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TACTICAL OFFENSIVE ACTION

GENERAL TREND OF COUNTERGUERRILLA ACTION

Aside from the previously noted large-scale mopping-up operations, the usual day-by-day counter guerrilla action was remarkably small and limited in nature. Guerrillas seldom made any broad attacks against well-armed Japanese units and were usually sufficiently agile and resourceful to evade large enemy forces. Consequently the Japanese devoted much of their time to locating and ferreting-out small guerrilla units, especially guerrilla cadre who had infiltrated their area and were going about organizing and propagandizing the local peasantry.

Thus the occupation forces were concerned primarily with small-scale planned tactical operations against individual resistance elements rather than with all-out concentrated attacks on guerrilla bases. Most such actions tended to center in the twilight zones between the guerrilla bases and Japanese-controlled areas. Though such operations were small and sporadic in nature, their importance was well known to both sides; it was these day-by-day engagements which ultimately decided who would really control much of the land.

Because guerrillas were known to wear Japanese uniforms, each member of the counter guerrilla unit would usually wear a white arm band or some other means of easy identification. A minimum of ammunition and weapons was taken both for reasons of mobility and also to ensure that little equipment and ammunition would fall into the hands of the guerrillas in case of defeat. The Japanese extensively employed scouts clad in mufti, and whenever possible native spies would be sent ahead to reconnoiter the area. On some occasions a small unit in regular uniform (usually a squad) would be sent ahead to invite guerrilla ambush. This was a frequently adopted tactic when the exact location of the guerrilla force was undetermined. The main Japanese elements would then slip up quietly and surprise the guerrillas in the act of ambushing the small advance party. Special emphasis was given to flank and rear security. Some units often employed double the usual number of men for this task in dangerous counter guerrilla operations.

A favorite means of attack was the raid or ambush. The attack was usually quick and aggressive and every attempt was made to make the best use of superior fire power. As the guerrillas seldom had bayonets (and were usually poorly trained in their use) the Japanese preferred in-fighting, often after extensive use of grenades. The Japanese again utilized these forces purely for military operations and seldom made serious attempts to organize and direct them for politico-military action.

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COUNTERGUERRILLA TACTICS

Continually stressed in Japanese counter guerrilla tactics was the need to adopt, as far as possible, the tactics employed by the guerrillas themselves. Counter guerrilla units were to be independent, resourceful, cunning, and highly mobile. Recruiting for such units was usually voluntary in nature. A favorite method of attack, for example, was the raid or ambush of a guerrilla force; in this way the Japanese attempted to turn guerrilla techniques and methods to the advantage of the counter guerrilla forces.

Intelligence was always of first importance. It was a recognized prerequisite for any successful counter guerrilla action and all possible means known were employed to gain intelligence of guerrilla activity. Spies were used, informers paid off, close security checks made, patrol reports analyzed, captured guerrillas interrogated, and so forth. Experienced counter guerrilla fighters recognized that in an area where the populace was often hostile and the terrain unknown guerrilla intelligence would most likely be of a high order, and they made every effort to mislead guerrilla sources of information while developing their own. They also reasoned that greater mobility, superior fire power, and better trained soldiers could go far toward offsetting any initial advantages the guerrillas might gain through better intelligence channels.

Intelligence, however, remained a glaring weakness in almost all counter guerrilla operations. This was especially true with regular forces temporarily operating against guerrillas. In order to augment their piecemeal clues as to the location of a suspected partisan force, regular army commanders frequently resorted to air reconnaissance and even to bombing, strafing, or artillery barrage to "pinpoint" the enemy's location. An even more standard procedure was to send out additional patrols to probe the suspected area in reconnaissance operations similar to those conducted in regular warfare. Combat hardened guerrillas, however, usually looked upon such activity as a strong indication of an impending Japanese drive and either shifted to another region before the attack or else bolstered their defenses and set up a series of deadly ambushes.

Once the Japanese commander felt that sufficient intelligence material had been gathered and evaluated, the counter guerrilla units were made ready to go into action. Each man wore light clothing and Chinese-style slippers to ensure speed and secrecy.

SPECIAL COUNTERGUERRILLA FORCES

Regular rear-area security patrols were only infrequently employed in active counter guerrilla operations. Their duties seldom required that they take such action, and few such units were adequately equipped for this effort. Although in many areas regular infantry or garrison units were charged with counter guerrilla operations, whenever possible special counter guerrilla detachments would be organized for this specific purpose. This was especially true in the regions where the Japanese commanders were more experienced and the guerrillas themselves more fully developed and better led. Such an area was North China, where the Japanese formed a number of specially trained

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units which were organized and equipped to undertake these difficult but highly important operations.

The principal organ in North China assigned this work was the North China Special Security Force, under which functioned a number of special security battalions and companies. These units were highly independent in nature and transferred their area of operations according to local conditions. Command was decentralized and all personnel were especially trained for their work.

Typical of such units was the 1st Company of the 3d Security Battalion of the North China Special Security Force. This unit operated against Chinese Communist guerrillas along the Hopei border area in North China. In eight-and-one-half months of operation (from September 1943 to June 1944) the 1st Co accounted for 219 guerrillas killed and an undetermined number wounded and captured. At the same time unit casualties were only 9 dead and 13 wounded. Over ten counter guerrilla actions were taken during this period, all of which were considered successful.¹⁴

The organization of the 1st Co was not unlike that of the other special counter guerrilla forces operating in North China at the time (see following table). Each platoon had one machine gun and two mortars, though a majority of the men were equipped with rifles. Platoons were usually broken down into five squads, eight to nine men per squad. This outfit traveled mostly by foot, making occasional use of motor transport for longer distances. It never called on either artillery or air support for any of its actions. Such a procedure was usually preferred, for the demands of regular forces for such weapons and equipment were greater elsewhere.

Although these special units often proved highly effective in operations against guerrillas, they were usually too few in number and often were misused at the command level. Some attempts were made to put such units under the direct command of the senior area commander, but more often than not such detachments came under the tactical direction of the local senior officer and were frequently used in a manner for which they were not designed. Usually one element made the main assault while a reserve force laid down the supporting fire. Sometimes squads or platoons would be deployed along avenues of retreat to ambush the fleeing guerrilla remnants. Hot pursuit of a retreating guerrilla force was allowed but taken only with the most extreme caution. The Japanese were careful not to overextend their forces in such pursuit.

As far as possible these were the standard tactics employed by experienced counter guerrilla units. The great diversity of operations, terrain, and guerrilla forces encountered, of course, necessitated a maximum of flexibility, and each commander was expected to be both aggressive and resourceful in tactical direction. Often a new guerrilla tactic would be countered by a special counter guerrilla tactic. Of great importance, of course, was a competent, intelligent command and experienced, battle-hardened soldiers.

The following two operations were typical of those conducted in North China and may provide a clearer picture of Japanese tactics in the day-by-day counter guerrilla operations.

The Operation at Wang Chia-tse¹⁵

In early November 1942 Japanese intelligence informed a special security detachment that a guerrilla cadre numbering some 15 men was suspected of

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operating in the vicinity of the village of Wang Chia-tse north of Soochow. A close check of the mail passing through the village and a recent census count led the unit commander to the conclusion that the guerrillas were, in truth, operating from Wang Chia-tse itself. He subsequently decided to make a raid on the village to kill or capture the guerrillas.

ORGANIZATION OF THE 1ST COMPANY, 3D SECURITY BATTALION NORTH CHINA SPECIAL SECURITY FORCE

Elements	No. men	Total
Company commander	1	1
Command platoon		
Platoon commander	1	-
Intelligence section	8	-
Propaganda section	4	-
Supply sergeant	1	-
Armorer-artificier	1	-
Communications section	3	-
Administration (S-1)	3	-
Reserve	14	-
Medical orderly	2	-
		38
Special police unit ^a		
Command section	6	-
Educational propaganda section	2	-
Interpreter	1	-
		9
1st platoon	-	38
2d platoon	-	39
3d platoon	-	41
4th platoon	-	42
Total	-	207

^aConcerned especially with secret service work undercover activities with the local populace, etc.

The raid was planned for 16 November and was to be executed just after dawn. The attackers were provided with 15 rounds of ammunition and two hand grenades each. The force was broken into three sections, each numbering some 15 men. Each section was issued a light machine gun to give supporting fire. Section leaders were supplied with two smoke grenades.

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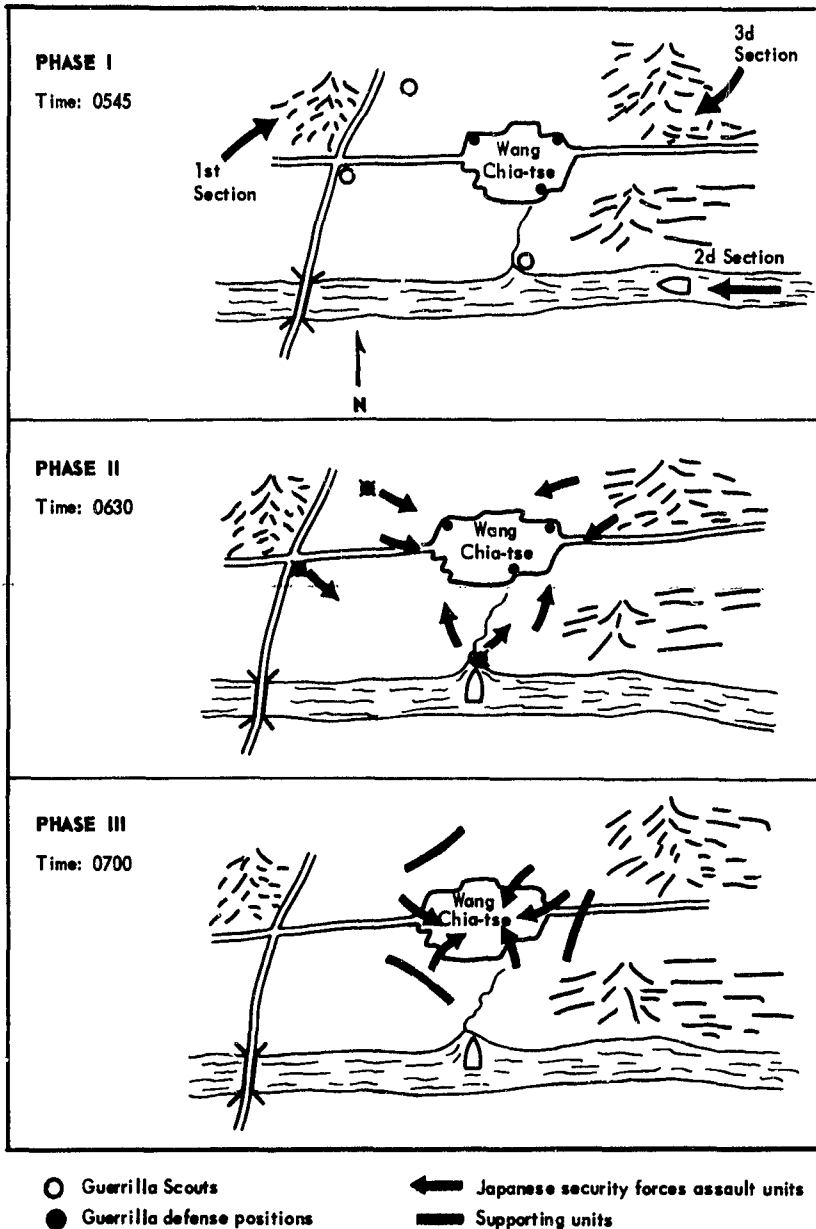


Fig. 8—Operation at Wang Chia-tse, Showing the Three Phases of Attack and Capture by a Japanese Counterguerrilla Unit

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Two native spies sent ahead reported three suspicious-looking individuals suspected of being guerrilla security scouts. One was fishing in the stream south of the village, another "resting" at the crossroads west of Wang Chia-tse, and the third tilling the soil in a field northwest of the village. The Japanese commander decided that to ensure the success of the effort all three of these individuals would have to be silenced "with speed and dispatch." According to plan the sections converged on the village simultaneously from different directions, the 2d section by small boat.

At 0620 one man moved up silently from each section, making use of all available concealment, and each killed one of the suspected guerrilla scouts. The main elements then began to make for the village walls on the run. At 0630, when within a hundred yd of the village, they were greeted by small-arms fire coming from the direction of the walls.

The Japanese detachment commander immediately ordered a smoke screen, to be followed by an all-out assault. Because of the enemy fire five squads made simultaneous assaults, while the remaining three furnished covering fire. By 0700 two of the squads had gained entrance to the village by the main gates, while the remaining three used grappling hooks to climb over the walls (see Fig. 8). Four guerrillas firing from the walls were either killed before or during the assault and two others were wounded in a brief skirmish which took place in the village square. The supporting squad to the east of the village killed two guerrillas attempting to flee from the town and the remaining four were apprehended without incident after a two-hour house-to-house search. The Japanese detachment suffered two dead and three wounded, all members of the assault party.

After the operation, captured guerrilla weapons were gathered together and the prisoners were taken off to jail. A few days later, a special Japanese security detachment was stationed temporarily in the village to maintain law and order and the villagers were sternly lectured by the commander about the penalties of harboring dissidents. Two of the village elders were subsequently put in charge of the village and held responsible for its future conduct.

The Operation at Chang Hsin-an¹⁶

On the night of 11 April 1941 the commander of a Japanese special security detachment learned that a sizable guerrilla force (estimated at around 200 men) had infiltrated the area in the vicinity of the town of Chang Hsin-an in Shantung province. Although the Japanese security unit numbered then no more than 75 men, its commander realized that the guerrillas presented a real threat to nearby railroad lines and decided upon an immediate attack.

The security force was organized into nine squads, numbering from eight to ten men each. By midnight they had proceeded by truck to within two miles of Chang Hsin-an. Scouts had reported that the guerrillas were then inside the town itself and, as far as known, had not taken any special security precautions.

The Japanese troops detrucked and began a gradual encirclement of the town. There was a full moon and the countryside was easily visible. Possibly because of his numerical inferiority the Japanese commander decided against a surprise attack and ordered mortar bombardment of the town instead. This commenced at 0230. The guerrillas were evidently taken completely by surprise but soon recovered, and an intensive fire fight ensued.

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By 0400 the Japanese forces began to close in, making extensive use of both machine-gun and mortar fire to cover their advance. By 0420 the Japanese forces had breached the city walls in several places and heavy street fighting ensued. The Japanese commander expected the struggle inside the town to continue and was at the point of deploying his machine guns for fire support when the guerrillas seemed to melt into the surrounding houses and compounds. Within fifteen minutes the town fell under an ominous silence. The Japanese commander immediately set about to regroup his troops for a house-to-house search.

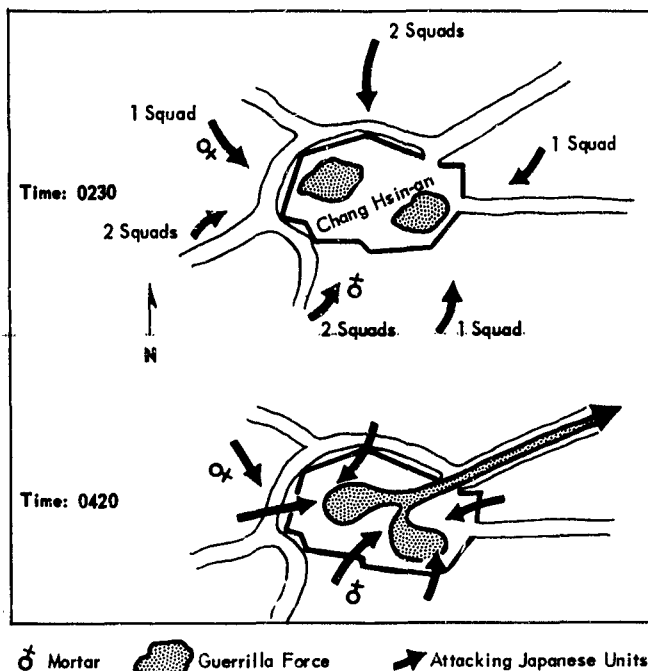


Fig. 9—Operation at Chang Hsin-an, Showing Japanese Attack and Guerrilla Escape

Without warning the guerrillas suddenly regrouped in one of the streets by prearranged signal, and began to race out of the village through the north-east gate. The commander pursued with what elements he could muster at the moment and engaged a small guerrilla rear guard at the village gate. By the time that resistance had been overcome, however, the guerrillas had apparently faded into the surrounding countryside.

By daylight the Japanese held count of the night's effort. They had suffered ten dead and four wounded. All told some 42 guerrilla dead lay scattered throughout the village and a house-to-house search turned up nine more who had failed to leave with the main guerrilla body. Only two pistols, three rifles, and four grenades, however, were captured.

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Although the main guerrilla force succeeded in making good its escape, the Japanese commander himself considered the operation to be a success. The guerrillas had been driven from the area, dispersed with heavy losses, and their power in the village broken. This was but one of many day-by-day operations conducted by these special security detachments against the guerrillas throughout China.

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